



Are You A Turtle Neck Driver?

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Ever get in the car after a long day at work and just slump into the seat with your neck sticking forward like a turtle out of its shell? Or sit in the car during a long car ride and start to feel pain in you back, neck, or even down your leg? Sitting in a car for long rides, or even short ones, sometimes can be difficult and painful. Following some easy tips you can modify your posture while driving to relieve some pain felt in the back, legs, neck, and even arms.

First, modify your seat position to allow for proper posture between all the limbs. Make sure that the feet comfortably reach the pedals, allowing the right foot to pivot between the gas and the brake. Make sure you are not slumping to reach the pedals. The seat should be a comfortable distance from the steering wheel, with the elbows slightly bent. The back of the seat should be positioned with slight lean to the back, this helps to decrease pressure through the low back. Adding a lumbar roll (aka a rolled up towel) behind you low back can add support for the low back to also decrease pain. The neck should be in alignment directly over the shoulders, no sticking the head forward like a turtle. This will help to keep the neck and shoulder muscles relaxed while driving, helping to decrease pain and tension. A cue you can use to maintain this posture is to place your rear view mirror in a position where you can see perfectly out of it when you are sitting in a nice upright position. That way if you notice you can't see out of the mirror it is a reminder to sit up.

Another good tip while driving is to keep both hands on the wheel. This keeps the shoulders level when driving. If you are driving with just on arm the shoulders can become unbalanced, causing one side to be more tense than the other, which can lead to pain. Keeping the hands at 9 and 3 o'clock, or lower, on the wheel is advised. If the air bags were to deploy, having the hands in these positions would be the most safe. If the arms are near the top of the wheel when the air bag goes off, they may hit the face/body with force, causing injury. Also, if airbags deploy while you are honking your horn, you may be the victim of a 200 MPH punch to the face.

Lastly, ensure that you are not sitting on anything. Having a wallet in your back pocket can cause an unbalance in your pelvis, leading to pain. Take out additional items from your pockets before sitting down to reduce any pressure or unbalance caused by sitting on the item.

Don't be a turtle neck driver; following these tips can lead to better posture and a more comfortable car ride. Make sure to use proper posture, from head to feet, to decrease pain and pressure. Use cues if necessary to help remind yourself to use good posture. Use these tips in your next car ride and you will be a happy driver.